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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to compare the social studies curriculum of Illinois schools with recommendations presented by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Task Force on Scope and Sequence which appeared in "Social Education," April, 1984. Courses offered during the 1981-82 school year in 483 junior high schools and 716 high schools were compared with course listings by grade level found in the Task Force report table of "Optional Sequences for Grades 7-12." (In this table, four optional sequences are offered to meet the needs of different school districts and communities). Following an examination of 250 different social studies course offerings, it was shown that Illinois schools offer courses in social studies that correlate very closely with the first option described in the NCSS report--U.S. history being taught most often in grade 8, U.S. history and government in grade 11, and world cultures/history in grade 10. Sociology and psychology courses in Illinois are offered most often during the 12th grade, consistent with NCSS recommendations that a series of options be offered during grade 12. The survey also showed that Illinois schools offer relatively few courses in the history of women, minority studies, or Russian history. Limitations of comparing lists of social studies courses are discussed and studies analyzing the content of courses are recommended. Tables include a simplified version of the NCSS "Optional Sequence for Grades 6-12" and a tally of course offerings in Illinois junior and senior high schools. (LH)

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Analyzing the Preliminary Report on Scope and Sequence
in the Social Studies

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Abstract

Analyzing the Preliminary Report on Scope and Sequence in the Social Studies

At the NCSS meeting in San Francisco, the John Jarolimek task force on scope and sequences presented its preliminary report to the membership of NCSS and the Board of Directors. The Board adopted the preliminary report of the task force, but with the stipulation that the document be subject to additional investigation and analysis. This paper analyzed the preliminary report on scope and sequence by comparing the recommendations of the task force with the social studies curriculum of 1,100 in Illinois.

The study compared over 250 different social studies course offerings, grades 7-12, with the recommendations of the NCSS task force on scope and sequence. It was shown that Illinois schools are offering courses in social studies that correlate very closely with Option 1 of the preliminary report. American History is offered mainly at the 8th grade level and American History and Government at the 11th grade, all of which are recommended by the task force. The survey also showed that relatively few courses are offered in Illinois in history of women or minorities or Russian history.

ANALYZING THE PRELIMINARY REPORT ON SCOPE AND SEQUENCE IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES

Two separate, but related, events made this study possible: the report by John Jarolimek on the recommendation of the Task Force to define a scope and sequence for the social studies and the Illinois Survey of Course Offerings and School Enrollments for 1981-82. One year ago the Jarolimek task force presented the recommendations to the NCSS Board represented in the April 1984 issue of Social Education. Just the month before, a report on the status of social studies in Illinois secondary schools was presented to the Illinois State Board of Education. By that time, we had decided to compare the statistics on Illinois social studies course offerings for 1981-82 with the options presented by the NCSS Task Force report.

We felt it would be interesting to compare the recommendations of the Task Force with the social studies curriculum in Illinois. At the time of the study, Illinois mandated American history be taught to all public school students. Schools were required to teach patriotism and the principles of representative government enumerated in the Declaration of Independence, the United State Constitution and the Illinois Constitution. Other social studies mandates existed, but only consumer education was required. Students were required to complete one year of social studies before graduation from high school; for example, one semester of American history and one semester of American government.

In the spring of 1981, the Illinois State Board of Education began a review of all state education mandates. In January 1985, Dr. Donald Gill, the State Superintendent of Instruction, will send recommendations to the Illinois General Assembly replacing our mandates with Outcome Statements.

If implemented, the Outcome Statements will have a major impact on the social studies curriculum in Illinois reviewed and analyzed in this study.

Methodology

We compared the course listings by grade level found in the Task Force report table of "Optional Sequences for Grades 6-12" with course offerings in Illinois for the 1981-82 academic year. One hundred percent of the Illinois public junior and senior high schools identified the social studies courses reporting student enrollments by grade levels. We extracted a list of course offerings for grades 7-12 from the Illinois survey which were the same or similar to the course options recommended by the NCSS Task Force. The lists are reported in Tables 2 through 5. The figures in each table represent the number of schools offering the particular course at the specific grade level for the 1981-82 academic year.

Figure 1
Sample of Social Studies Curriculum Offerings
1899 - 1983

Course Offering						
	(1) Committee of 7 Recommendations-1899	(2) NEA Committee on Social Studies Recommen- dations-1916	(3) Illinois Report from National Survey by Jerri Sutton, Research Findings-1976	(4) Project SPAN Research Findings-1980	(5) Fontana Survey Research Findings-1980	(6) NCSS Guide- lines Recommen- dations- 1983
Grade Level	7	Geography/ European History	Geography	World History/ Culture/ Geography	Geography/ World History/ Culture	A Changing World of Many Nations: A Global View
	8	American History	United States History	American History	American History	Building a Strong and Free Nation: The United States
	9	Ancient History	Civics	Geography/ Social Studies/ World History	World History/ Cultures or Civics/Govern- ment	System that makes a Demo- cratic Society Work: Laws, Justice and Economics
	10	Medieval and Modern European	European History	World History	World Cultures/ History	Origins of Major Cultures: A World History
	11	English History	American History	United States History	American History	American History
	12	American History and Civic Govern- ment	Problems of Democracy	United States History/ Psychology/ Sociology	American Govern- ment/Sociology/ Psychology	American Govern- ment/Civics/ Political Science
(1) Hertzberg, Hazel W. Social Studies Reform: 1880-1980. Report of Project SPAN. Boulder, CO: Social Science Education Consortium, 1981, p. 14. (2) Dunn, Arthur W. The Social Studies in Secondary Education. Bulletin No. 26. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Education, 1916, p. 12. (3) Sutton, Jerri. National Survey of Science Education, Kindergarten-Grade 12. ERIC Document ED 128 275, Richmond, VA: Virginia Department of Education, 1976, p. 21. (4) Lenzel, James G., and Douglas P. Superka. "Curriculum Organization in Social Studies." The Current State of Social Studies: Report of Project SPAN. Boulder, CO: Social Science Education Consortium, 1982, p. 89. (5) Ibid., p. 93. (6) Social Studies Task Force on Scope and Sequence. "In Search of a Scope and Sequence for Social Studies." A paper presented at the 64th Annual Meeting of the National Council for the Social Studies. San Francisco, CA; November 1, 1983.						International Area Studies Social Science Elective Courses Anthro./Econ./ Gov't./Psychol./ Sociology Supervised Experience in Community Affairs local options.

An examination of Figure I reveals that curriculum offerings in Illinois have remained stable since the turn of the century. This is true not only of course offerings but also in recommended grade placements. Although no recommendations were made for the junior high school in 1899, the samples have been consistent in those grade levels since 1916, with geography or world history predominantly offered in the 7th grade and American History in the 8th. Similar statistics are evident for the high school, with World History being offered at the 9th or 10th grades, American History at the 11th or 12th, with the addition of more options at the 12th grade since 1976.

TABLE I
OPTIONAL SEQUENCES FOR GRADES 7-12

	OPTION 1	OPTION 2	OPTION 3	OPTION 4
GRADE 7	A changing world of many nations: A global view	↔	People and cultures of the Eastern Hemisphere	A changing world of many nations: A global view
GRADE 8	U.S. History with emphasis on social history and economic development	Economics and law-related studies (1 semester each)	Interdisciplinary study of the local region (geographic, social, economic, historical) with an environmental emphasis	↔
GRADE 9	Economics and law-related studies (1 semester each)	Cultures of the non-Western world	World history and cultures (2-year sequence)	World cultures
GRADE 10	World History (both Western and non-Western)	The Western heritage		The Western heritage
GRADE 11	U.S. History (chronological, political, social, economic)	↔		↔
GRADE 12	Options: Issues and problems of modern society Introduction to social sciences The arts in human societies International area studies Social science elective courses Supervised experience in community affairs	Government (1 semester); Issues and problems of modern society (1 semester)	Economics and law-related studies (1 semester each)	↔

The optional sequences for grades 7-12 developed by the Task Force on Scope and Sequence and acknowledged by the Board of Directors as a Preliminary Position Statement underscores the realization that one scope and sequence program for all school districts would be impractical. Instead, this paper presents a guide with four options that can be adapted to meet the needs of particular communities. 7

TABLE II

COURSES OFFERED IN ILLINOIS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

	Number of Courses Offered	Grade		
		7th	8th	7th & 8th
U.S. History	298	21	208	68
Social Studies (7th Grade Level)	209	206	1	2
Social Studies (8th Grade Level)	172	1	169	2
Geography (World, Regional, U.S., Urban) 3 offered at 9th grade	43	38	1	1
Geography (7th & 8th)	96	83	4	9
World History (7th & 8th)	44	39	4	1
Area Studies: Africa, Asia, Europe	1	1		
Consumer Ed/Econ.	36	3	25	8
Community Civics (3-9th grade)	9	3	3	
Environment/Conservation	2	2		
Illinois History/Government Fine Arts	26	5	15	6
Law in American History	6	1	2	3
Regional Geography	10	9	1	
U.S. Constitution (7-9th grade)	25	2	21	1

In 1981-82, 483 Illinois junior high schools offered a total of 76 different social studies courses to students.

It is readily apparent that Illinois schools are following closely the Option 1 of the Task Force on Scope and Sequence since 208 schools offer U.S. History at the 8th grade. It is not as clear what information is being taught at the 7th grade level since the commonly used title for the 7th grade classes was Social Studies. Two hundred six courses are taught at that level and 172 at the 8th grade level under that all-inclusive title.

TABLE III
COURSES OFFERED AT HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

	Number of Courses Offered	Grade							
		9	10	11	12	11/12	9/10	10-12	9-12
Economics/Problems	114			1		109			
Consumer Education	258		44	19	102	44			
Law Related	89				26	26			
World Cultures/History	483		130				66	99	71
U.S. History	716			472		111			
Sociology	391				112	189		52	
American Government	325				178	68		21	
Psychology/ Behavioral Science	381				121	200		39	
Geography	324	51	36				52	74	56

In 1981-82, 716 Illinois high schools provided a total of 214 different social studies courses to students.

The most offered course at the high school level is U.S. History and 472 of those are scheduled at the 11th grade level and 111 at the 11th and 12th grades. These courses coincide with the four options of the Task Force, all of which list U.S. History at Grade II. The second most offered course is World Cultures/History with 483 schools listing it and 130 of those including it at the 10th grade level. Again, this finding is in line with the Task Force recommendations which place it at Grade 10 in the four options. Sociology and Psychology, which have appeared as course offerings since 1976, also rank high with 391 and 381 schools respectively reporting that these subjects are available. The majority of these courses are offered at the 12th grade or 11th-12th grade. These courses were suggested as electives by the Task Force in Options 1 and 2.

TABLE IV

OPTIONAL COURSE OFFERINGS

	Number of Courses Offered	Grade							
		9	10	11	12	11/12	9/10	10-12	9-12
Issues/Problems of Modern Society	114			23	28	37		3	
Problems of Democracy	77				48	15			
Introduction to Social Sciences/Survey	80	16	18				13		
Arts in Human Societies	23		2		7	7		2	
Anthropology/Archaeology	36				8	19		7	
Women in History	3					2		1	
U.S. Constitution	18			4	7				
Illinois History/ Government	55				6		9	14	8
African	8							4	
Area Studies:									
Latin American	6		2					2	
Africa/Asia/Europe	18		7						
Asian/African	10		2		2		1		3
Asia	17		1		1		1	7	1
Middle East	6						2		
Non Western	8	2						2	
Russian	16					7		5	

The most frequently taught subject in a special section of optional courses taught in Illinois is Issues/Problems of Modern Society, offered by 114 schools, largely at Grades 11 and 12. This again is in line with the suggested sequence of the Task Force. In analyzing the optional courses, it is interesting to note what courses are not offered as well as those that are. Only three schools offer a course on Women in History, none are devoted exclusively to minorities in history, and very few courses are provided exclusively to non-western histories. Russian history is taught in 16 schools and Asian history is available as a separate course in 17.

Conclusion

The list of social studies courses taken by Illinois secondary students and the recommendations of the NCSS Task Force are very similar. Despite mandates by the General Assembly, Illinois students benefit from a wide variety of course offerings. Illinois social studies course offerings are consistent with the pattern of course offerings over the last eighty-five years revealed in Figure 1. If history is any measure of what we can expect in years to come, we are not likely to see any major shift in social studies course offerings in the near future.

If Illinois replaces specific course requirements and mandates with Outcome Statements, the effect in traditional Illinois social studies curriculum could be significant. Only legislative action and time will tell just how great the impact will be on students graduating from Illinois secondary schools.

The limitations of this study outnumber the benefits to social studies education. Comparing lists of social studies courses has little, if any, bearing on the sum and substance of what is being taught in American social studies classrooms. The comparison only verifies the tight hold of the traditional curriculum on our public schools. What we need are more studies analyzing the content of the social studies courses. In Illinois, are students studying the democratic values and beliefs in a manner conducive to the development of effective citizens? Do students study and analyze the principles of representative government? Are they taught critical thinking and decision making skills and other life skills? A shift to an outcome-based

instructional systems will enable Illinois educators to more effectively monitor the educational growth and development of secondary students. Care must be taken to set up an effective verification system above and beyond minimum competency-based testing.